

Coming out  
of its shell  
since 1949

# ArtReview

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The Emperor's new clothes

Michèle Graf & Selina Grüter, Margaret Honda, Silvia Kolbowski *Reprise*

*Felix Gaudlitz, Vienna 4 March – 8 May*

*Reprise* continues Felix Gaudlitz's strategy of exhibiting the most bloody-minded kinds of minimalism – these 13 works all make a show of their own retreat from visual stimulation into discourse about what counts as a 'work'. Each questions its own existence as art and the conditions for its display as such – hardly the most original move, since this forms part of the standard lore of minimalism and conceptual art – and offers the viewer plenty to talk about (if they can find the words) even if they are left with little to look at.

This is crystallised in the A4 wall text from Silvia Kolbowski's *Enlarged from the Catalogue: February 1990* (1990), a collection of 16 catalogues (whose subjects include Jenny Holzer, Pierre Bonnard and MOMA's 1989 exhibition *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism*) mounted on three rows of Plexiglas shelving. The text explains

that they are all from special exhibitions held at New York institutions during February 1990 – dominated by mostly European male artists – but goes on to quote extensively from Jacques Derrida's explanation of the meaning of deconstruction from *Positions* (1972), before asking if these words and this display constitute an appropriate art-object: 'Does reading them on a gallery wall take the pleasure/satisfaction out of looking at pictures?' it asks.

That sums it up: *Reprise* almost gleefully refuses the viewer any libidinal investment, but that doesn't mean its contents are entirely joyless. Margaret Honda's *Elements from "Perennial"* (1997/2020) consists of part of the artist's archive from the last two and a half decades contained in shiny, silvery Marvelseal barrier foil (an extremely resistant material

first used by the US military). This serves a vital function: it not only 'protects' Honda's work, but allows it – here and now, in front of us – to question its own status as something that is visible, exchangeable and collectible, since the very condition of our seeing it today is the concealment of the original sculptural material from 23 years ago. Michèle Graf and Selina Grüter's seven-part *Pocket Liner* series (2021), meanwhile, is a selection of single words taken from cut-up paper receipts glued onto graph paper, turning them into concrete poetry. *Pocket Liner 1* says, 'The Grand HANDLING of information or Your truthfully printed letter may be needed'. *Pocket Liner 3* is the shortest of the bunch, reading 'how TO read THE TIME: Item THYME', like a ransom note written by incompetent kidnapers filled with temporal dread. *Max L. Feldman*



Margaret Honda, *Elements from "Perennial"*, 1997–2020,  
Plexiglas, polyethylene, bubble wrap, cardboard, Marvelseal, 71 × 56 × 15 cm.  
Courtesy the artist and Felix Gaudlitz, Vienna